



Donna Cannon (back row, left) and Superintendent Dr. Beverly Emory pose with some of Cannon's students at Diggs-Latham.

Magnets

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have been the hallmarks of her tenure, Parker said.

"Our school is evolving and changing, I believe, in a positive way," she commented. "...We have a lot of good things to offer."

Mineral Springs, the home of one of the oldest magnet programs in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, has not always enjoyed a favorable reputation, and Parker said she is constantly fighting to help the community to see her beloved school in a new light.

"Schools change," she said. "People should just come and take a look and not just make assumptions based on the previous history of the school."

The school, which has a predominantly minority population, offers many amenities, from courses in piano and gymnastics to an in-house television broadcast program, a free after school tutoring program, a homework room where students can study independently and a host of clubs and activities, Parker said.

"This year has been a big emphasis on trying to get kids involved in their education and not just having it be adult-driven," she explained. "If they take ownership of their school, they will be better students for us."

Parker will have the chance to tout the many good things that are going on at Mineral Springs this weekend, during the 2014 Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Magnet Fair. The fair, which is slated for Saturday, Jan. 11 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Benton Convention Center, will introduce families to the magnet school concept - and to the themes available on the local level - prior to the Jan. 24 magnet school application deadline, said Kimberly Marion, interim director of Magnet Schools for WSFCS.

"The purpose of magnet schools is to offer choices for students and parents so that they have opportunities to connect students to a particular interest," she explained. "Research tells us if we can tap into children's interests as early as elementary school, then they stand a better chance of graduating from high school."

Representatives from each of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County's 19 magnet schools will be on hand for the annual event, which is expected to draw more than 500 attendees.

"You can talk to staff and students and parents



Marion

at the fair," noted Marion, a former educator and school administrator. "It's a chance to meet, face to face, with real folks to talk about what's available for your child, as a parent, or for you, as a student."

Two thousand thirteen was a banner year for local magnets. Hanes Magnet Middle School, which has a STEM curriculum, was honored as the nation's top magnet school when it was designated as the 2013 Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Distinguished Merit Awardee, and Diggs-Latham Elementary and Reynolds High School were both honored with John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts School of Excellence in Arts Education Award, accounting for two of only five schools statewide to receive the award this year. Additionally, Parkland High School was recognized on both the state and national level for the improvements it has made to student achievement.

"Our magnet schools are very high performing," Marion said. "We're impacting almost 12,000 students in the district."

The Kennedy Award has garnered much attention for Diggs-Latham, yet there are many people in the community who still don't know that the system has an Arts and Global Studies magnet option on the elementary school level, said Principal Donna Cannon. The fair offers a welcome opportunity to spread the word about Diggs-Latham, which is home to one of the system's smallest magnet school populations, Cannon said.

"It helps us to showcase what we have here," she remarked. "It helps us to get our name out there."

In keeping with tradition, performances by students from magnet schools across the county will serve as entertainment at the fair. For Diggs-Latham, which hosted nine in-house performances last school year, the fair presents a valuable learning opportunity, Cannon said.

"I think it's important because it just gives us more exposure," she noted. "Our kids get excit-

ed. It's another chance for them to perform in front of an audience and showcase what they've learned, and that's important."

Students in every grade level can take advantage of magnets across the district, choosing among disciplines such as the arts, language immersion and international studies, the International Baccalaureate Programme, and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Cannon, who has spent more than a decade in local magnets, said she is hopeful that area families will consider attending the fair and discovering all that magnet schools have to offer.

"I think magnet schools are great - they're great for our kids," she declared. "It's a definite advantage for our students."

The annual magnet fair will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 11 at the Benton Convention Center. Magnet school applications are open until 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 24. For more information, visit www.wsfcsmagnets.net.



Keith Grandberry and Evelyn Acree pose with Inmar CEO L. David Mounts late last year at a Winston-Salem Urban League conference and job fair.

Grandberry

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Grandberry would be leaving, declined to provide details. She released a short statement Monday via email.

"Keith Grandberry has verbally announced his resignation from the Winston-Salem Urban League," Acree wrote. "I am not at liberty to discuss details at this point. I will make a statement at a later date."

The change in leadership at the agency follows months of rumors that there was acrimony between Grandberry, who was hired in 2006, and several members of the board.

During his tenure, Grandberry had pushed for partnerships between the Urban League - a nationally-acclaimed agency that strives for racial equality through the alleviation of poverty - and businesses and corporations for job training and employment purposes. He had also expanded the agency's offerings beyond Winston-Salem to the Raleigh/Durham area after the Triangle Urban League branch foundered a few years ago. Grandberry's efforts and ambition were praised by many, but his management and leadership styles did have detractors.

Urban League Board Member Beaufort Bailey, a former County Commissioner, said he is unaware of any ill-will between Urban League Board members and Grandberry.

"I think he just wanted to go on to other things. He's got potential and he's done so much for us. I think he just thought it was time for him to spread his

wings a little bit," Bailey said. "...I think it's time for him to move on. If he wants to go on to bigger and better things, I don't think anybody would try to hinder him from that."

Bailey said he believes Grandberry will have a bright future.

"Keith has been wanted other places, and he just does a tremendous job here in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. A young man like that, you don't expect to keep him forever," Bailey declared. "We just appreciate everything that he's done for the city."

Other board members weren't as forthcoming. Longtime members Patrice Toney and Brian Anthony declined to comment, referring all inquiries to Acree. Cheavonne Willis, president of the Winston-Salem Urban League's Young Professionals chapter, also opted not to comment on his leadership or departure, saying the group "isn't able to make a statement" at this time.

Mayor Allen Joines said he was surprised to hear Grandberry was leaving the agency.

"I've certainly enjoyed working with Keith on a number of projects over his tenure," Joines said. "...I certainly wish him the best in his new endeavors."

The Winston-Salem Urban League has been operational since the 1950s and is currently one of just two Urban League chapters in the state. Grandberry, whose resume lists a wide-range of non-profit, corporate and political consulting work, was hired after a nationwide search to replace the venerable Delores "D" Wylie, who headed the agency for 16 years before her retirement in December 2005.



Bailey

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